ABSTRACT

Applicant: Vermont Works for Women

Project Title: Vermont Works for Women WANTO Program (VW3): A statewide effort to increase women's participation in pre-apprenticeship and training programs in construction, electrical, and plumbing A/NTOs

Area to be served: Vermont (statewide)

Total cost per participant (max): $14,707 (not including businesses unions/educators/ individuals receiving technical assistance)

Funds requested: $351,846

Scope of the Project: The Vermont Department of Labor estimates that the state has a shortage of 8,000 workers annually to meet labor demands, and Vermont has an unemployment rate of only 2.8 percent, compared to 4 percent nationwide. While low unemployment is regarded as a sign of a healthy economy, in Vermont the high cost of living, rural and mountainous geography, an agriculturally-based economy, and state and local policies limit development. As a result Vermont has too many low-skilled workers, and too few who possess the skills and training for the available middle skill jobs. These labor force conditions, paired with Vermont's high cost of living, place women without college degrees on a treadmill of low-wage, low-skill jobs, where they receive few benefits and little opportunity for advancement. To address these conditions, VWW will collaborate with unions, technical education providers, and employers to implement VW3, a WANTO program to: (1) develop pre-apprenticeship and training programs in electrical, plumbing, and construction; (2) provide TA to employers and training programs to increase their capacity to recruit, engage, and support female workers; (3) establish supports for women in A/NTOs; and (4) establish a marketing campaign to promote VW3 and A/NTOs as a viable career path for women in Vermont.

Key partners in the VW3 project will include the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) #300 and Plumbers/Pipefitters Union Local #693 (UA); and the Center for Technology, Essex, one of Vermont's career and technical centers that provides A/NTO training to high school students and adults. Other partners VWW will engage in project activities include the Vermont Talent Management Pipeline's consortium of construction industry employers, other Vermont career and technical education centers, and manufacturing employers based in northwest Vermont.

Proposed Outcomes: As a result of VW3, at least 24 women will complete pre-apprenticeship or training programs; at least ten A/NTO employers, unions, and training providers will receive technical assistance; and current female A/NTO workers, unions, employers, and VW3 training participants will benefit from new peer support networks.